

2026 MAIZE QUEEN COMPETITION



COMPETITION GUIDELINES

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The program is intended to grow confidence and potential in young rural women

- Provide an opportunity to young rural women to:
 - Increase awareness for a local charity or organisation
 - Raise money for a Local charity or organisation
 - Create friendships with other likeminded young women
 - Engage in community activities
 - Encourage others to participate in community events
 - Develop new skills and understanding of workplaces and career pathways
 - Embrace sessions of self-care
 - Have fun!

PROGRAM OUTLINE

- A brief information evening will be held (time and date TBA).
- In June to August the program co-ordinators will provide multiple development & community engagement opportunities which may include but are not limited to:
 - Public Speaking/Presentation Skills;
 - Personal leadership skills and strengths;
 - Innovative Fundraising;
 - Attending community events
 - Participate in leadership and mentorship opportunities presented throughout the program
- Presentation of the Queens will be at the Street parade

QUEEN CATEGORIES

16-25 year-old Women

- **Maize Festival Queen** – Overall winner
- **Maize Queen Runner-up** - Second
- **Mazie Festival Charity Princess** – Most funds raised – inventive fundraising
- **Encouragement award** – Will be given by the judges for the most improved/showing growth throughout the program.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1. Entrants must be a resident and employed in, or a student in the Tablelands Regional Council area.
2. Entrants must be turning 16-25 years of age in the year of the Festival to enter
3. Entrant sponsorship must be by a Firm, Club, Association, Organisation, or by the entrant themselves.
4. Complete all parts of the application form;
5. Payment of \$150 for each Queen entrant (usually paid by sponsor);
6. Work with your sponsor to enter a float into the Mardi Gras parade;
7. Attend compulsory community events (information session and 2026 Maize Festival Main Street Parade + minimum 2 other Maize Festival events or Queen's Competition workshops)
8. Fundraise for your nominated local charity;
9. Participate in leadership and mentorship opportunities presented throughout the program;
10. Agree to abide by the code of conduct;
11. Named Queen to accept the title & prize
12. Entrants give permission for photos to be taken and used in promotional or marketing material for current and future use.

FEES/PARTICIPATION COSTS

- \$150 entry fee paid to Maize Festival Committee
- Travel to & from events
- Meals at events where food is not provided

SPONSORS

Each entrant is to be supported by a community sponsor. This can be a business, community organisation, sporting organisation or school (the sponsor can also be the receiving charity). The role of the sponsor is to support their entrant throughout the festival period and work collaboratively with the entrant and their chosen charity. At a minimum, this would include:

- Payment of a \$150 entry fee to the Maize Festival Committee
- Entry and decoration of a float into the street parade
- Attendance at the Sign On/Briefing and Street parade (see event schedule)
- For business sponsors, decide with your entrant which charity/community organisation you would like to raise funds for (see fundraising notes)
- Working collaboratively with the entrant to fundraise for the chosen charity.
- Provide a logo for promotional use throughout the year

Additional sponsorship to assist with any other participation expenses would no doubt be appreciated but can be decided between the entrant and sponsor.

FUNDRAISING

Entrants are required to conduct their own fundraising in collaboration with their sponsors/community groups as well as participate in group fundraising during the Maize Festival. It is highly encouraged that participants use innovative means to raise funds.

Entrants fundraise specifically for their chosen community organisation. The receiving organisation needs to be not-for-profit raising funds for facilities or services in the local region and is subject to the Atherton Maize Festival Committee's approval. Ideally, the service would be located in the Tablelands Regional Council region. At a minimum, they must be able to differentiate funds raised through the festival and ensure those funds are spent back in the local area.

Recognition of eligible charity funds: All fundraising for the chosen Charity must be conducted between 1 June – 27th August 2026. All funds raised must be deposited to the Atherton Maize Festival bank account (Bendigo Bank, details will be provided at the information session) by 5 PM Thursday 27th August 2026. Deposited funds for the chosen Charity must be deposited with a reference to the Charity (requirements will be explained at the information session). Atherton Maize Festival Committee will disperse these funds to the community organisation by 14 September 2026.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The Maize Queen Program is focused on engagement levels and personal growth over the course of the program. In an effort to judge this holistically, the judging occurs throughout the period of the festival and is not limited to formal events. Judging across the following criteria is carried out by a number of mentors involved:

1. Community engagement
 - a. How well you engage with the community & each other at community events.
2. Collaboration in fundraising
 - a. How well you collaborated with your community group to raise funds
 - b. How well you contributed to & participated in group fundraising
3. Personal Growth & Development (judging panel present at workshops/mentor days)
 - a. How well you participate in and contribute to personal development events
 - b. The level of personal growth evident between your starting & ending presentations
4. Personal Presentation (judging panel present at workshops/mentor days)
 - a. How appropriately you present yourself – behaviour
 - b. Speech – clear and easy to understand with good eye contact.

This is subject to change. We will go through this on the Sign-on Day, and you will be informed of any other changes prior to participating in any judged events.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Your participation in the Maize Festival Queen Competition requires that you conduct yourself in a manner that will showcase the reasons we pride the youth in our region. We welcome your full personality but expect respectful interactions with guests, speakers & coordinators at all events and with all community members at public events. The Maize Festival Committee reserves the right to terminate your participation at any time throughout the Festival should your actions in some way bring the program into disrepute. Let's keep it simple:

No foul language or clothes that showcase them, no talking/texting/scrolling on phones during events, neat and appropriate clothing to be worn at all events, positive engagement with all participating contestants.

Appropriate and prudent handling of fundraising money accompanied by adequate records.

secretary.maizefestival@gmail.com